

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
4141 N. Sam Houston Pky. E. #260
Houston, Texas 77032
(281) 442-4066

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 13, 2002

Contact: Special Agent Jerry Monroe
(409) 673-5846

**RANCH SETTLES WITH GOVERNMENT
OVER BAITING FIELDS FOR COMMERCIAL HUNTING**

(SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS) This afternoon, Special Agent Jerry Monroe of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) presented a \$15,000 check to Colonel James Stinebaugh, Chief of Law Enforcement for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) for use in TPWD's Operation Game Thief program. The money represented part of a settlement of a USFW case investigating illegal dove hunting over "baited" areas on the 74 Ranch. The 74 Ranch is located in both Atascosa and McMullen counties approximately 65 miles south of San Antonio.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act [Title 16 United States Code, Section 703 and 704(b)(2)] prohibits hunting on "baited" areas. On September 22, 2001, Agent Monroe apprehended 17 dove hunters on the 74 Ranch for hunting on an area that had been "baited" with milo grain or maize. Each of the hunters paid \$650 to hunt on the 74 Ranch.

In the settlement reached last month, the 74 Ranch paid a \$15,000 fine for illegally baiting areas of the ranch for commercial hunting purposes. Also as part of the settlement agreement, 74 Ranch owner **GEORGE ROBINSON**, of Houston, Texas, agreed to make a \$15,000 donation to the Texas Parks and Wildlife's Operation Game Thief program. In exchange, the Government agreed to dismiss the notice of violation filed against employees of the 74 Ranch and not to pursue individual charges against the hunters. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act provides up to one year imprisonment and a maximum \$250,000 fine for violations. Assistant United States Attorney Charles L. Jenkins handled this case on behalf of the Government.

#####